

REMARKS

Reexamination and allowance of the present application is respectfully requested.

The Examiner objects to claim 2 on the ground that it contains an informality therein. By the current amendment, Applicants amend claim 22 to change the phrase "is comprises" to ---comprises---. In view of the present amendment, Applicants submit that the objection to claim 22 no longer exists, and respectfully requests that this ground of rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 4-6, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18 and 20-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as failing to particularly point out and claim the subject matter regarded as the invention. By the current amendment, Applicants amend the claims, paying particular attention to the concerns raised by the Examiner. In view of the amendments made herein, Applicants submit that the grounds for this rejection no longer exist. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph rejection.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's 35 U.S.C § 102(b) rejection of claims 1, 2, 7, 13, 15 and 23 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,765,165 to HARPER.

Applicants submit that HARPER is directed to checking for duplicates in a linked list, by checking the linked list using a hash bit map. Applicants submit that this differs from the instant invention, in which a metadata file contains information related to a distributed object, the metadata being used to retrieve, categorize and/or organize the object.

In this regard, Applicants submit that while the inode of HARPER contains information about a file, it does not include information for the file name and the actual data contained in the file, and the inode serves as a pointer to the actual physical block on a disc containing the file data. On the other hand, Applicants submit that the metadata of the present invention contains content related to bibliographic matter, management information, and attribute information, as discussed at, for example, pages 2 and 3 of Applicants' specification.

In rejecting claim 1, the Examiner alleges that HARPER's directory file is equivalent to Applicants' metadata correspondence management file. Applicants submit that HARPER does not disclose or suggest Applicants' record file and relation to the directory file. Accordingly, Applicants submit that HARPER's directory file bears no relationship to the metadata correspondence management file of the instant invention.

Further, while the Examiner asserts that HARPER's entry is equivalent to Applicants' record type, Applicants submit that the record type of the present invention is disclosed in the specification as referring to the columns in a table. On the other hand, HARPER's entry refers to rows in a table. Accordingly, Applicants submit an additional ground exists for concluding that the two are unrelated and should not be considered to be equivalent.

In view of the above, Applicants submit that the present invention is not anticipated by HARPER. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection.

Applicants also respectfully traverse the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claims 3-6 and 16, as being obvious over HARPER in view of U.S. Patent 6,611,862 to

REISMAN. In particular, Applicants submit that REISMAN at least fails to disclose the features lacking in HARPER, discussed above. In particular, Applicants submit that REISMAN fails to disclose/suggest the metadata of the present invention, or anything that could reasonably be considered to be equivalent to Applicants' metadata correspondence management file. Accordingly, Applicants submit that if one attempted to combine the teachings of HARPER and REISMAN in the manner suggested by the Examiner, such a combination would fail to include all the features of Applicants' claimed invention, as discussed above. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the presently claimed invention is not rendered obvious by the prior art combination suggested by the Examiner, and respectfully requests withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103 rejection.

While reviewing the present application, Applicants noted a minor error in Fig. 2 of the drawings. Specifically, steps 203-205 are indicated in Fig. 2 as being "htm" files, whereas the specification indicates that steps 203-205 are "mtd" files. Accordingly, Applicants herewith submit a replacement sheet of drawing containing corrected Fig. 2. No prohibited new matter has been added.

Applicants also note that the Examiner has not applied any prior art rejection against claims 11, 18, 20, 21 and 22. Applicants thus believe that the Examiner considers the subject matter of these claims to be allowable over the applied art of record, and respectfully requests such an indication from the Examiner in the next official communication.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

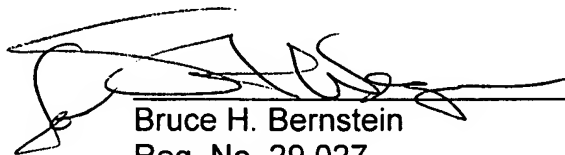
In view of the fact that none of the art of record, whether considered alone or in combination, discloses or suggests the present invention as defined by the pending claims, and in further view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the Examiner's action and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested and are believed to be appropriate.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Commissioner determine that an extension of time is required in order to render this response timely and/or complete, a formal request for an extension of time, under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a), is herewith made in an amount equal to the time period required to render this response timely and/or complete. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any required extension of time fee under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17 to Deposit Account 19-0089.

If there should be any questions concerning this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
Naohiko NOGUCHI et al.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce H. Bernstein", is written over a horizontal line.

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AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheet of drawing includes changes to Fig. 2. In Fig. 2, steps 203, 204 and 205 are revised to indicate that they are “mdf” files, as disclosed in the specification of the present application.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet